

Gerry E. Studds Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary



State of the Sanctuary Report



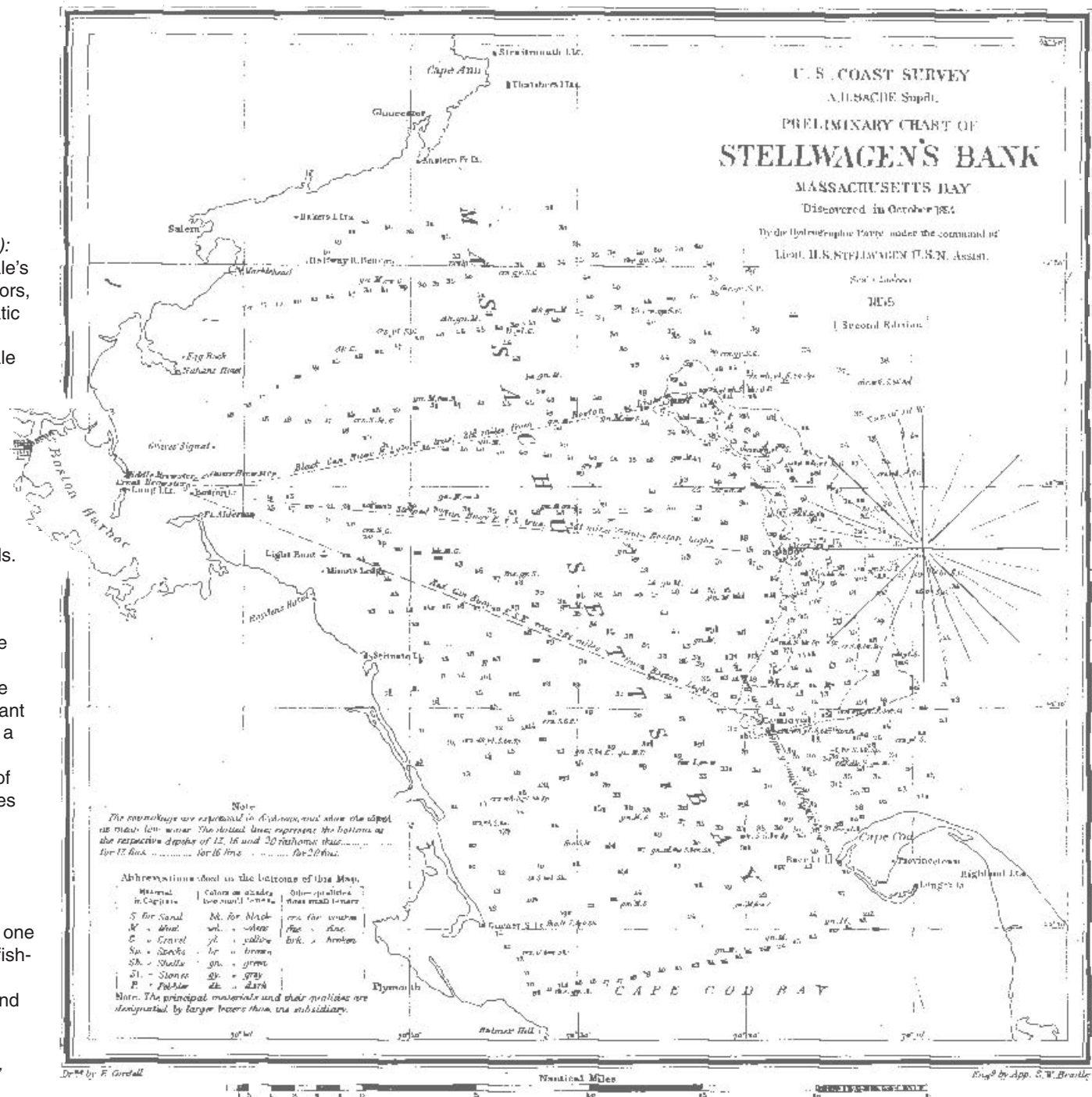
NOAAocean**SERVICE**

Cover Photos
(clockwise from top):
The humpback whale's
repertoire of behaviors,
including the dramatic
breach, makes it a
favorite among whale
watchers.
Photographer:
Regina Asmutis-
Silvia, IWC

A feeding whale
means leftover
baitfish for these
enterprising seabirds.
Photographer:
David Wiley, IWC

Efforts to restore the
Atlantic cod, the
Massachusetts state
fish, to more abundant
numbers has led to a
groundfishing
closure in the Gulf of
Maine which includes
a portion of the
Sanctuary.
Photographer:
SBNMS Dive Team

The stern trawler is one
of several types of fish-
ing boats to ply the
waters on and around
Stellwagen Bank.
Photographer:
Regina Asmutis-Silvia,
IWC.

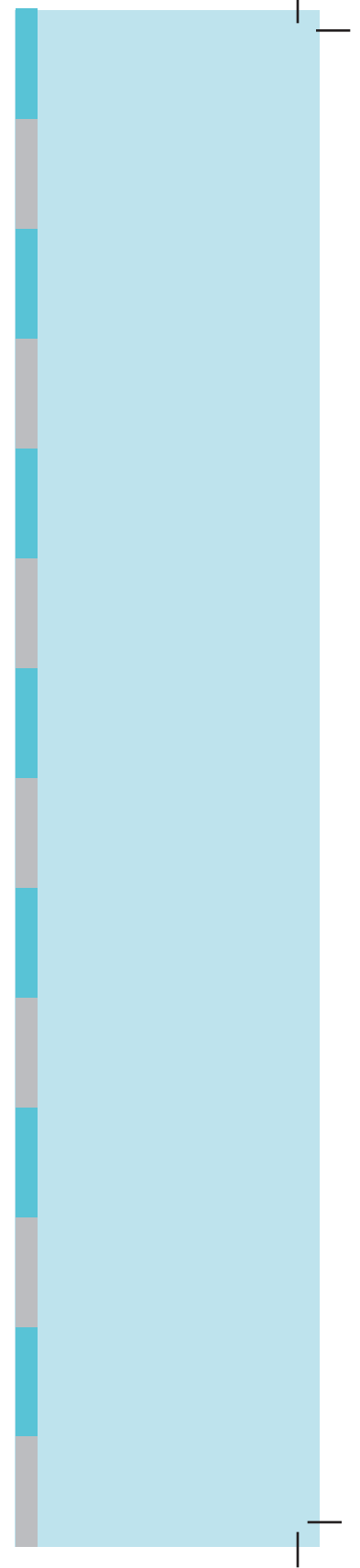


Commander Henry
Stellwagen's 1854-
1855 map of
Massachusetts
Bay shows a
continuous bank at
the mouth of the
Bay. He wrote:
"I consider the
promulgation of the
discovery a very
essential thing to
navigators and that
the knowledge of it
will highly benefit
commanders and
the great commer-
cial interest of the
City of Boston —
and that it will
serve as an
invaluable aid to
mariners bound
in during thick
weather by day
or night."

This document introduces you to the Gerry E. Studds Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary and describes the site's activities and continuing management plan review process. For ready reference, an insert orients you to the range of issues and possible actions facing the Sanctuary, based on comments received during the previous public comment period and staff analysis. Please turn the pages, become familiar with the Sanctuary and learn how you can help guide future management of this very special place.



June 2002



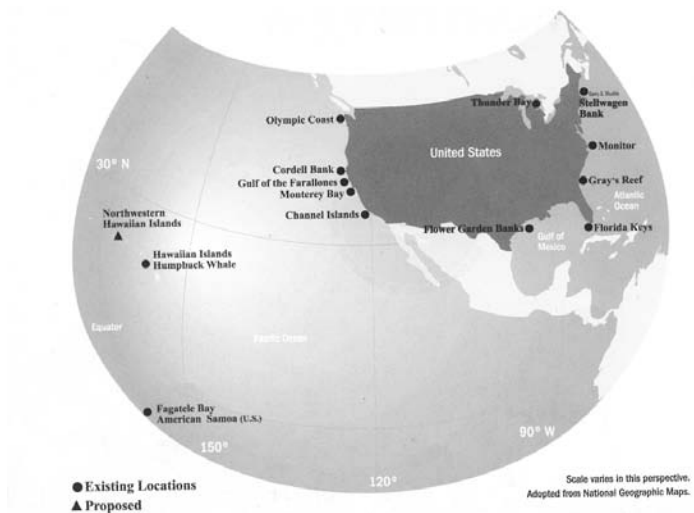
The National Marine Sanctuary Program

The National Marine Sanctuary Program, a network of 13 marine protected areas, encompasses marine and freshwater resources from Washington State to the Florida Keys, from Massachusetts to American Samoa, and from Lake Huron to the Gulf of Mexico. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Ocean Service has managed marine sanctuaries since passage of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972. Title III of the Act is now also known as the National Marine Sanctuaries Act.

Today, our marine sanctuaries contain kelp forests and deep ocean gardens, near-shore coral reefs, areas for whale feeding, reproduction and migration, deep-sea canyons, and underwater archaeological sites. They range in size from one-quarter square mile in Fagatele Bay, American Samoa, to more than 5,300 square miles off Monterey Bay, California - one of the largest marine protected areas in the world. Together, these sanctuaries protect nearly 18,000 square miles of coastal, open ocean and Great Lake waters and habitats.

While some activities are managed to protect resources, certain multiple uses, such as recreation, commercial fishing and shipping, are allowed to the extent that they are consistent with a sanctuary's resource protection mandates. Research, education and outreach activities are other major components in each sanctuary's program of resource protection.

The National Marine Sanctuary Program is a world leader in ocean management placing a primary emphasis on the protection of our nation's living marine and submerged cultural resources.



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**The Gerry E. Studds Stellwagen
Bank National Marine Sanctuary**

The Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary stretches between Cape Ann and Cape Cod at the mouth of Massachusetts Bay and is virtually the size of the state of Rhode Island. Its boundaries include the submerged lands of Stellwagen Bank, all of Tillies Bank and Basin, and the southern portions of Jeffrey’s Ledge. The Sanctuary protects 842-square miles in a topographically diverse area geologists calculate was created some 14,000 years ago during retreat of the last Great Ice Age glaciers. Then, Stellwagen Bank was emergent land and mastodons and woolly mammoth roamed about.

Today, whales swim where mastodons trod, and the Sanctuary has become home to a wide variety of marine mammals, seabirds, fishes and invertebrates. Notably, the Sanctuary is recognized as one of the primary feeding grounds of the highly migratory humpback whale in the North Atlantic. It is the part-time home of the endangered northern right whale, of which 300 are estimated to survive. Its varied seafloor topography supports a high diversity of demersal fish species. It is one of only a few areas in the Gulf of Maine (including Jeffreys Ledge and the Great South Channel) that seasonally aggregate Atlantic bluefin tuna in large numbers. And, it is an area of exceptionally high primary productivity and production.

With concentration of such great resource diversity and production potential in one place, the Sanctuary attracts extensive commercial, recreational, scientific and educational uses. Located in the backyard of an estimated 6 million people living in the greater Boston metropolitan area, it enjoys tremendous possibilities for education and outreach. And, situated amidst literally dozens of prestigious research institutions, highly regarded non-governmental organizations and functionally related state and federal government agencies, the Sanctuary has exceptional opportunities for partnership and cooperation.



Mission

To conserve, protect, and enhance the biodiversity, ecological integrity, and cultural legacy of the Sanctuary through carefully conceived programs of resource management and responsible stewardship.

For More Information

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